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**GAO**

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee  
on Investigations, Committee on Armed  
Services, House of Representatives

September 1991

**DEFENSE  
REORGANIZATION**

**Compliance With  
Legislative Mandate  
for Contingency  
Planning**



145067

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National Security and  
International Affairs Division

B-245489

September 30, 1991

The Honorable Nicholas Mavroules  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Investigations  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you requested, we assessed Department of Defense (DOD) guidelines for the preparation and review of contingency plans. We focused on whether the guidelines were in compliance with the procedures as described in the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. In addition, in response to subsequent discussions with your staff, we are also providing in appendix I a discussion of the role of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in crisis planning.

In June and July 1991, we briefed your staff on the results of our work. This report summarizes those briefings.

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## Background

The DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 addressed the need for contingency planning and set forth procedures for improving the contingency planning process. Designated responsibilities included in the act are listed below.

- The Secretary of Defense, with the approval of the President and after consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall provide annually to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans.
- The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is to assist the Secretary of Defense in preparing written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans and in reviewing such plans.
- The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, subject to the authority, direction, and control of the President and the Secretary of Defense, is responsible for (1) providing for the preparation and review of contingency plans, (2) advising the Secretary on critical deficiencies and strengths in force capabilities identified during the preparation and review of contingency plans, and (3) assessing the effect of such deficiencies and strengths on meeting national security objectives and policy and on strategic plans.

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## Results in Brief

DOD has established guidance consistent with the provisions of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 addressing contingency plans. Secretary of Defense policy guidance designates the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary for all matters concerning the integration of DOD plans and policies with overall national security objectives. That guidance assigns the Under Secretary specific tasks relative to contingency plans.

The first Contingency Planning Guidance document was issued in 1989. The 1989 guidance was prepared and coordinated by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. The position of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy was vacant during most of that time. The 1990 guidance was sent to the White House in August of that year, but was not approved and thus not formally issued. The non-issuance was the result of the iterative planning process underway in 1990 to address the dramatic changes in the world environment. The 1991 guidance was in the final stage of processing at the end of August 1991, prior to being submitted to the President for approval.

The reviews called for in the 1989 and 1990 guidance cycles, according to Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) officials, focused on the assessment reports that were provided to the Secretary of Defense by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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## DOD Guidance Consistent With the Law

The DOD guidance implementing contingency planning is consistent with the provisions of the DOD Reorganization Act. For example, DOD Directive 5111.1 specifies responsibilities and functions of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. This directive identifies the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters concerning the integration of DOD plans and policies with overall national security objectives. Moreover, it states the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy shall:

“Assist the Secretary of Defense in preparing written policy guidance for the preparation and review of operational and contingency plans, including those for nuclear and conventional forces (including Special Operations Forces), and in reviewing such plans.”

Figure 1 illustrates how the contingency<sup>1</sup> planning process is set up within DOD and indicates that designated responsibilities are consistent with the Reorganization Act.

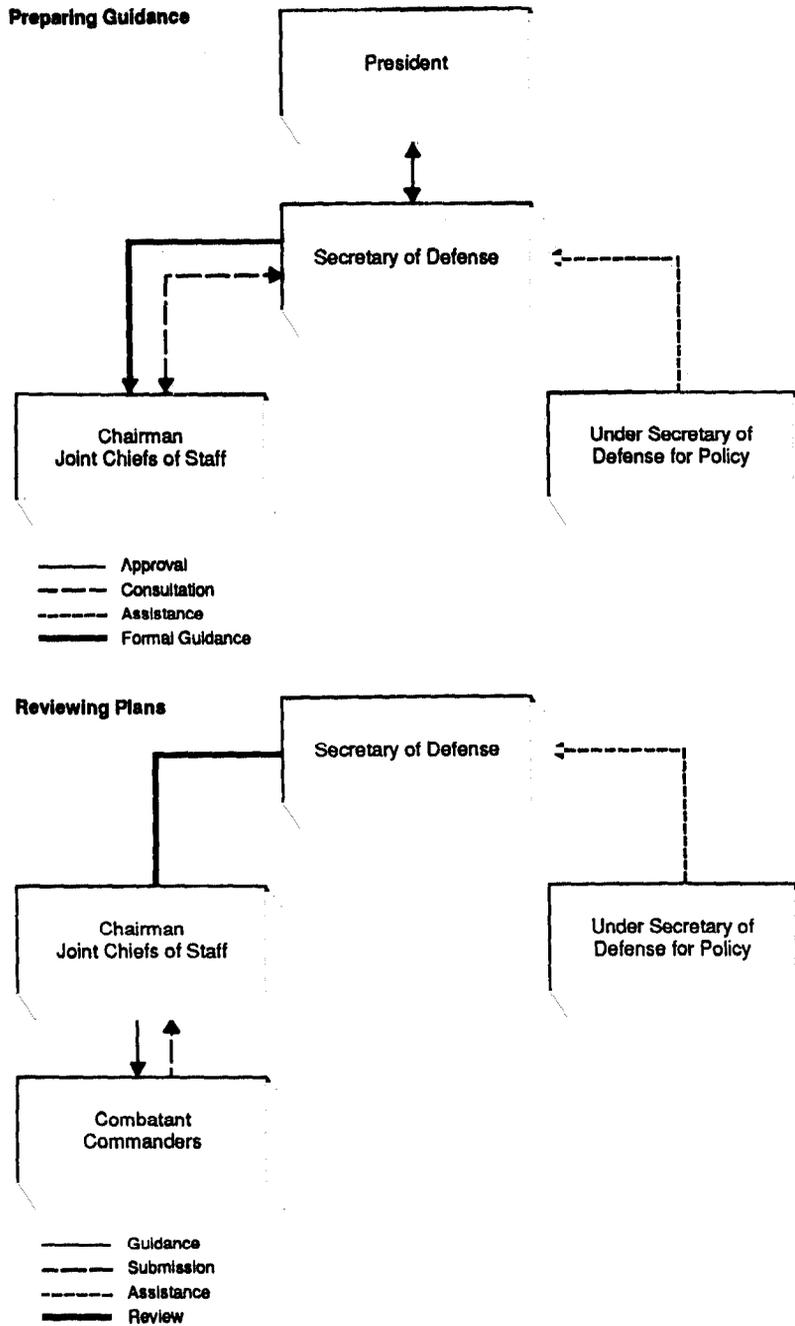
In the current administration, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is considered to have a significant role in contingency planning. As a member of DOD's Executive Committee, the Under Secretary is involved in the fundamental issues of defense policy and management. In order to strengthen the ties between national policy and plans, the Under Secretary and select elements of his staff assist the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense in developing guidance for, and in reviewing, operation plans.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy has designated, through the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Strategy and Resources), the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Resources and Plans) as his focal point for contingency planning. The Assistant Deputy Under Secretary and his staff in the Plans directorate assist the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in coordinating the preparation of the Contingency Planning Guidance and in reviewing plans. See figure 2.

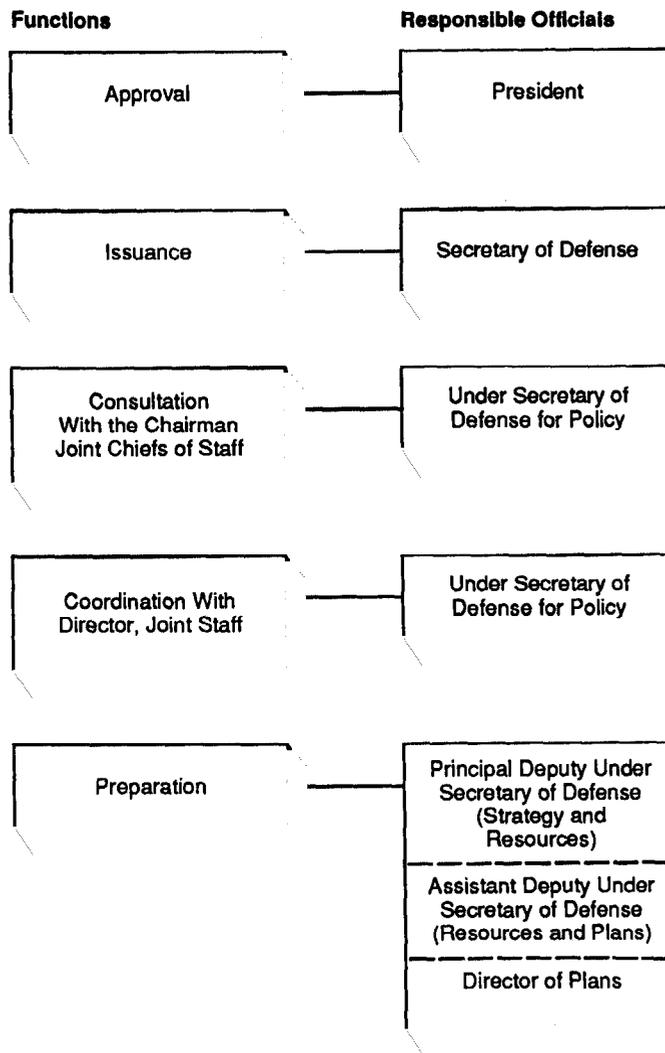
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<sup>1</sup>"Contingency plans" and "operation plans" are synonymous terms in this report when it discusses the current integrated defense planning system. Previously, under the framework of a "Global Family of War Plans," contingency plans were developed for other contingencies within a unified commander's area of responsibility. Since the global planning framework has been replaced with a regional planning framework, the distinction between operation plans and contingency plans no longer exists.

**Figure 1: Contingency Planning Responsibilities Under DOD Reorganization Act**



**Figure 2: Contingency Planning Guidance Functions and Responsible Officials**



## Contingency Planning Cycles: Guidance and Reviews

Since the passage of the DOD Reorganization Act in 1986, three contingency planning cycles have been undertaken. A complete contingency planning cycle would include the preparation and issuance of the Contingency Planning Guidance as well as the review of plans designated in the guidance. The 1989 cycle is the only complete contingency planning cycle as of August 31, 1991.

Following the collapse of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe, the 1990 guidance, which was based on a global framework, was not issued. The

1990 guidance was primarily prepared in 1989. However, its coordination and consultation took place in 1990, during the same period the new framework for defense planning was being shaped. In August, when the guidance was sent to the White House for approval, the President had already announced in an August 2, 1990, speech a fundamental shift in planning. Consequently, according to both OSD and senior National Security Council officials, the National Security Council staff chose not to ask for presidential approval.

The 1991 guidance has been drafted, coordinated, consulted, and was sent on August 19, 1991, to the Secretary of Defense for forwarding to the President for approval. Table 1 shows the date that the guidance was issued to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the date that the assessments of the corresponding plans were briefed to senior civilian DOD authorities.

**Table 1: Dates Contingency Planning Guidance Was Issued and Assessments of Plans Were Briefed**

Guidance	Date issued	Period/focus	Date briefed
1989	Jan. 19, 1989	1987-88/Global	Sept. 6, 1989
1990	Not issued	1989-90/Global	June 4, 1990
1991	In processing	1993-95/Regional	

The draft 1991 guidance apparently differs from previous guidance. According to OSD officials, it calls for reviewing the plans during development; previously, reviews focused on plans that had already been developed. This forward focus of reviewing plans during development is attributed to the change in planning framework from emphasis on global war to regional contingencies. The bringing about of fundamental change is also indicative of the level of coordination taking place within OSD and between OSD and the Joint Staff. According to OSD officials, the approval and issuance of the Contingency Planning Guidance is to be completed in the fall of 1991, and the review of the concepts of operations for the designated plans by OSD officials is expected to begin around May 1992. The more detailed review of the completed plans will necessarily be later.

## Scope and Methodology

We obtained data and views from division and director-level OSD officials and Joint Staff officials. We compared review memorandums coordinating the development of the contingency planning guidance documents with the legislation. We also toured the Crisis Coordination Center, reviewed documents, and met with the center's director and

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deputy director to understand crisis preplanning efforts. We conducted our work from April through August 1991 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

As requested, we did not obtain formal agency comments. However, we did discuss the matters contained in this report with DOD officials and incorporated their comments where appropriate.

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Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Armed Services; the Secretary of Defense; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. Copies will be made available to others upon request.

Please contact me on (202) 275-3990 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Other major contributors to this report were George E. Breen, Jr., Assistant Director, and William J. Wood, Evaluator-in-Charge.

Sincerely yours,



Paul L. Jones  
Director, Defense Force Management  
Issues

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# Under Secretary of Defense for Policy's Role in Crisis Planning

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The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, in addition to his roles as principal staff assistant to the Secretary of Defense on integrated policy matters addressing national security objectives, is also responsible in crisis planning for the management of the Secretary of Defense crisis management system. The system facilitates the rapid shift from a peacetime to an emergency decision-making environment. The Under Secretary is responsible for (1) developing policies, plans, and procedures for DOD's crisis management functions and (2) providing support to DOD and other U.S. government or state agencies for crisis management. The Crisis Action Packages maintained in the Crisis Coordination Center facilitate the dissemination and coordination of timely information during a crisis. The Crisis Coordination Center is located in the Pentagon and serves as the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) site for crisis preplanning, for conducting exercises, and for coordinating activities during a crisis.

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## Crisis Management System

The Crisis Management System is a standby system that is activated during a crisis by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Its most recent activation was for the Desert Shield/Desert Storm operations. The system facilitates the staffing process and assists OSD senior staff officials in executing their responsibilities. It does this by providing them the essential mechanisms and procedures necessary to follow. It focuses on those crisis management activities in which OSD principals below the level of the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of Defense play the major roles.

The Crisis Management System is designed to permit

- the rapid coordination of multiple actions,
- the dissemination of information essential to informed decision-making,
- the resolution of issues at the lowest appropriate levels, and
- the surfacing of coordinated recommendations to the Secretary of Defense for a decision or recommendation to a higher authority.

Under this system, members from DOD components and civil agencies gather in the center during a crisis and function essentially in coordination and information exchanging roles. Which members gather in the center for a given crisis is dependent upon the nature of the crisis. The center itself also provides a central place for the Secretary and other DOD principals to monitor a crisis and crisis-related activities.

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## Crisis Action Packages

Coordination is facilitated by Crisis Action Packages maintained in the Crisis Coordination Center. Regardless of the members present, Crisis Action Packages, which are prepared in advance, represent the essential tools for exercising coordination and exchanging information. Both people and packages are tested through exercises. The principal evaluation vehicle is the national security exercise program.

A Crisis Action Package is a set of documents designed to facilitate the assembly of essential information and provide specific guidance on likely issues and decisions that could confront the Secretary of Defense and other OSD officials during a crisis. Each Crisis Action Package contains background information on legal authorities and coordination requirements. They also contain draft copies of specific implementing documents that can be quickly adapted to a crisis situation.

Crisis Action Packages are organized in broad subject areas and address specific issues within these areas. For example, within the broad category of manpower, there are 16 Crisis Action Packages—13 addressing military manpower and 3 addressing civilian manpower. One package addressing military manpower is entitled “109 - Implement Presidential 200,000 Call-Up Authority.”

This Crisis Action Package identifies the OSD proponent (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs) and the decision level (President, with advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense) for the call-up. It states the legal authority, addresses the purpose and background for the authority, and identifies the actions associated with this decision. The package also discusses alternatives, expected benefits, anticipated costs and related actions, as well as concurrent OSD responsibilities. The package contains 10 draft memorandums that may be adapted for implementing a call-up decision. The memorandums cover internal DOD coordination and external coordination with the White House, as well as presidential notifications to Congress.



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